

MINUTES OF THE EAST GREENWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 2009

EAST GREENWICH POLICE DEPARTMENT

FIRST AVENUE

EAST GREENWICH, RI 02818

Regular Session 8:00pm

Members Present:

JeanAnn Guliano, Susan Records, MaryEllen Winters, Robert Durant, and Deidre Gifford were

present as well as Superintendent Meyers and Maryanne Crawford.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00p.m. by Chair Guliano. It was noted that the meeting started late due to the longer than expected Building Committee meeting.

Mr. Durant made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Records to table the Technology Committee minutes for the meeting held on 6-24-09.

Posting Assistant Principal Posting at Cole: Mrs. Gifford made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Records to advertise and post the Assistant Principal position and charge the personnel subcommittee with the charge drafting a policy of posting versus appointing.

Items regarding property liability insurance and workers'

compensation were discussed.

Superintendent Meyers recommended the school district award the property liability insurance and workers' compensation to the Trust. Mr. Durant made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Records to award the insurance to the Trust. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Durant made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Records to table the technology committee presentation to the 7-14-09 meeting.

It was noted that Mrs. McAuliffe elected to move her personnel review and contract renewal into open session.

Back into Open Session at 8:50p.m. Mr. Meyers continued where he left off the last executive session where he recommended for a three year contract for Mrs. McAuliffe. Mr. Durant made a motion to amend the agenda to add public comment. This was seconded by Mrs. Records.

It was stated by School Committee Attorney Raymond Marcaccio that public comments will not influence the decision before the Committee.

Lori DeCesaris, who was a PTG President at Meadowbrook, stated that there are different needs in the community that are not being met. They should be able to speak up as parents and Mrs. McAuliffe has been a wonderful administrator. People always have different opinions. A policy should be established so families have a method to voice their opinions on an issue they may have. She has traveled

around the state and has not seen a system as strong as East Greenwich. She feels parents don't have a path when they have an issue. She recommends that parents have a clearly understood process. Mr. Meyers stated there is a complaint process. Mr. Durant made a motion to end the public comments. This was seconded by Mrs. Records and was unanimous.

Vicki Bejma representing Mrs. McAuliffe asked if her client could be heard.

Mrs. Guliano asked for a motion for a three year contract for Mrs. McAuliffe. Mrs. Records made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Durant to have additional discussion. Mr. Durant wanted to state his concerns. Two months ago he didn't have these concerns until he started receiving the following emails: 1) Child was left with the custodian and Mrs. McAuliffe left the building during a snow storm. 2) Regarding child placement in a particular classroom with another child, because the child was bullied. Teacher indicated they don't have the opportunity to place the student in a particular classroom. 3) Communication issue but those can always be addressed. Mr. Durant asked Mrs. McAuliffe to address these comments. Mrs. Records has some concerns: 1) I have concerns regarding about communication and public relations between the principal and staff. You know there are adverse conditions at Meadowbrook. What are your intervention/plans to rectify in the future?

Mrs. McAuliffe states that the parent asked that we leave the child with the custodian during a snow storm. The child had not been picked up. Mrs. McAuliffe called the child's parents and she stated it was okay to leave the child with the custodian Mrs. McAuliffe followed up with the Superintendent to inform him of the conversation she had with the parents and Mr. Meyers didn't have an issue with leaving the child with the custodian. If it happened in December why did she not hear about it until June? Mrs. Records asked if she acknowledged there are some adverse situations at Meadowbrook. Vicki stated that is hard to answer and we don't know is the adverse condition. Mrs. Records stated that in the SALT Report there is an adverse situation. Mrs. Winters stated one needs to look at the whole report. She had four children who have gone through the Meadowbrook School and there is a strong group of teachers. Mrs. McAuliffe stated that the SALT Report it is a very good report. She is not a politician, she is there to carry out the educational process. The Superintendent will bring anything to her attention regarding these issues. She asked the committee to remember that the teachers were working to rule during the SALT visit. Everything she does is in the best interest of the school. Regarding child placements, all teachers are doing a good job and everything is equal.

Robert Durant-If a child is bullied what are your procedures? Mrs. McAuliffe states if there is bullying she will make the change She doesn't promise favoritism. She wants every teacher to work hard

and provide for all students. Vicki- if her evaluation is not meeting expectations you should offer professional development not an improvement plan. Mr. Meyers stated that areas of improvement through workshop with leadership will be very beneficial. Mrs. Guliano echoes Mr. Durant and Mrs. Records and stated the SALT Report is good and the only negative was communication. Mrs. Guliano is concerned about the morale in the building and told Tara she has some issues with staff in the building. She also stated that she has issues regarding communication and morale. Can you understand why a three year recommendation will not be the best? The School Committee received a document from parents with over 30 signatures and can't ignore it. There is something unhealthy in the building that needs to be addressed. Mr. Meyers stated it is a witch hunt. Mrs. Guliano stated there is a problem and she doesn't understand it. Mrs. Winters stated there is a problem and it is not all Mrs. McAuliffe.

Deidre Gifford stated there are consistent issues and it is the principal's responsibility to go to Charlie and Mr. Durant stated he is satisfied with the answers Mrs. McAuliffe has given him.

Mrs. McAuliffe stated she is a direct person and if one child is having a problem with another child, she will address it but she can't always talk with the parent.

Mrs. Gifford-What ever manner you have chosen to communicate is perceived in the negative.

Mrs. McAuliffe stated she received a number of letters at the end of the year which were very positive. JeanAnn asked Mrs. McAuliffe if she is concerned that parents have issues with her communication. Mrs. Records asked Mrs. McAuliffe that going forward what would she do to address these issues. Mrs. McAuliffe responded that she will encourage people to talk with her and establish a parent group to help them with their concerns, similar to what they do at special education meetings. A lot of work has been done regarding placements. She allows anyone the ability to come to her office anytime.

Susan Records asked if Tara had someone who has not approached her, what would she do? Tara answered that she is at school 1.5 hours prior to the opening of school. Susan asked if Tara speaks to staff every day. Tara answered she doesn't speak to staff every day. She tells the staff that even if they have an issue and it is dinner time to please call her. She would rather address the issue right away.

Charlie added that by contract he has to evaluate all administrators by January. Tara stated that if parents have an issue, they know they can call her. Bob Durant stated that some of these folks are reluctant to come forward. Charlie asked the Committee to respect the process and spoke about emails the Committee receives prior to contract renewal. If the parent's issues were important they should have

contacted him in a timely manner. Charlie questions the motivation. Mary Ellen Winters would like to call the question.

Mr. Marcaccio stated that every document that comes before the Committee tonight would be available. If it is the case she would like to ask the parents why they are coming forward now. Mr. Durant – snow storm, bullying and failure to communicate. JeanAnn wants to speak about a one year, two years or three year renewal. Mr. Durant would like to entertain something less than a three year renewal. Mrs. Guliano states the issue is with support staff. Mrs. McAuliffe does not think that the School Committee is familiar with administrators. There needs to be a protocol. She is not saying there are not issues, it is an open book. She can't address an issue if she is not aware.

Mrs. Guliano asked Mrs. McAuliffe if she sees this as a problem that issues have been raised by parents. She answered that of course she sees this as an issue. Susan states that acknowledgement of the issues needs to be resolved. Mrs. Gifford disagrees and told Mrs. McAuliffe that she said, "Somebody wants my job." Mrs. McAuliffe's lawyer asked about a renewal with an improvement plan. It is incumbent on Mrs. McAuliffe to speak with Dr. Mercurio to address the issue with the teachers. The communication needs to be improved. He would like to renew her contract with an improvement plan.

Mrs. McAuliffe's lawyer stating we are setting a blueprint when you intend to get rid of an administrator. They let the issue fester. Mrs.

Gifford stated that the slippery slope has Mr. Durant states this is not a reflection on Meadowbrook School. He thinks the communication issues can be addressed. Mr. Meyers repeated it is a witch hunt. He thinks it needs to get back to the school. It is the principal's responsibility to exercise leadership. Develop an advisory to address the issue. The process is in place. Mr. Durant-you may want to take it outside the school. Mrs. Gifford-What is implied that we do not have a problem with Mrs. McAuliffe's performance. Mrs. McAuliffe-Meadowbrook is a high performing school, has a high population and the most difficult kids are there. It has not had a negative impact on the children. Vicki asked for a two year contract. Mr. Durant made a motion to renew Mrs. McAuliffe's contract for one year. This was seconded by Mrs. Gifford. Mr. Durant stated he is not opposed to two years. Mrs. Gifford asked if we could put an improvement plan in the contract. Mr. Marcaccio stated we could put an improvement plan as long as the terms are reasonable. Mrs. Gifford stated she is sure this was difficult. She thanked Mrs. McAuliffe for her professionalism. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Superintendent's Contract: Everyone should get a copy of the contract.

Next meeting:

Teacher Evaluation-Patricia Dulac is on the Committee

New budget for field's project

School Committee to serve on Search Committee

Policies-First Reading

CPT –Report you will get prior to meeting

Pouring Contract

Technology Committee

Contract terms-Tara, Alexis, Dom, Maryanne, Cheryl Vaughn, Christine Uhrin

Vincent Varrecchione's Renewal

Meeting adjourned at 11:00p.m. Unanimous motion made by Mary Ellen Winters and seconded by Mrs. Records.

Maryanne Crawford, CPA

Director of Administration